

- THE NEXT STAGE OF PACIFICATION -

- Pacification and revolutionary reconstruction of this country is not a one stage operation.

- A year ago things looked bleak; invasion from the north had reached sizeable proportions; the Communists invaders were preparing to enter their third and final stage of swallowing the Republic of Vietnam.

- But the Vietnamese people did not accept defeat; they reacted with even more determination than they had shown previously; and their American and other Free World friends increased their efforts to assist a valiant people fighting for their birthright, the right to decide for themselves how they will live.

- Those were trying times and times of great despair; the entire country necessarily was a combat zone under strict military rule; the attempt to establish some semblance of supreme civil authority failed and your acting Chief of State, Chairman Quát, stepped down of his own accord in favor of the present military committee rule.

- Since those dark days of a year and less ago the tide of battle has changed. Today the invaders have changed from offense to defense. No longer is he alone able to choose the time and place of battle. His losses are staggering, his gains few.

- But the war is far from being won; many sacrifices are still to be made by the Vietnamese and their allies; this is the price of individual liberty and freedom of society.

- There is no question about the willingness of the Vietnamese and their Free World allies to continue making these sacrifices over whatever span of time is necessary, but to sacrifice one life needlessly or to prolong a war for one hour, one minute, longer than is essential for victory would be a thoughtless waste.

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- To avoid this periodically the posture of the nation for war should be reexamined.

? - Whereas a year ago all cities and towns required military protection, thus dispersing our forces in less productive garrison and guard duty, is this condition still true? Or, could the cities and provincial and district towns now be turned back to civil authority thus permitting the military to concentrate their forces where the enemy military is and exploit their gains to bring quicker victory.

- This question should be reexamined in light of the favorable changes that have occurred in the war. Of course to provide comparable civil protection the police would have to be expanded even more and paramilitary police augmentation forces would have to be designated.

? - And too to create expanding civil sanctuaries in every province in the country, with civil administration and justice prevailing, would not only strangle the enemy as his zones of operation lessened, it also would prove to the people what can be accomplished by helping their government.

- DEMOCRATIZATION -

- Political parties must reestablish themselves in the country side and among the people.

- Candidates for political office must identify themselves; they must be given opportunity to prove their worth through deed; and they must listen to the people's grievances and aspirations and, themselves, show their spirit to the people and voice their intentions and their plans.

- The mechanics for conducting free, secret-ballot elections must be carefully worked out so that each citizen, can go to the polls with confidence that freedom of choice is his, that he will not be intimidated before he casts his vote nor molested afterward.

- Assisting political parties, to truly reflect the desires of the people, the candidates to indentify and prove themselves, and the people so that they can cast their votes with knowledge and assurance of freedom is an immense task your government has undertaken. But it can be done and America and I am sure other nations will help but not interfere; the selection of candidates and the vote of the people belongs to the Vietnamese people alone.

2 - What must be done? Your political parties must "ground" themselves to meet the aspirations and needs of the people. In a war-torn country they will need help in their movement, in their publicity, in their administration. I feel certain that your government will work out an equitable basis for assistance and America stands ready to assist your government when this help is requested.

- Similarly the individual candidates for public office will need some assistance whether they be members of a party or running for office independently. Ways must be found by your government to help your candidates

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in their campaigning -- for this is a very expensive business -- and again America stands ready to help indirectly through your government.

- But the problems don't end with political parties and candidates; much work must be done in establishing the system itself -- the ballots, the booths, the systems of counting and authentication -- and the present officials and police must be thoroughly trained.

- Most important are the people themselves for the validity of an election in the end is their responsibility, and they must participate at all echelons to assure that it will be free and genuine and that all people are well-informed on issues and candidates.

- It is hoped that revolutionary political democratization of your country will be achieved by stages beginning at secure hamlets and progressively with elections for village and district chiefs -- as villages and districts reach a desired state of security -- and finally in the election of province chiefs as each province achieves it security.

- Such a progression would serve many purposes not the least being that potential candidates would have opportunity to prove their responsiveness and their worth in lower office before the people chose them for higher office.

- Moreover, such a system would serve to teach all citizens and all officials about their rights and responsibilities in the preparation for and conduct of free elections. America would be happy to lend whatever advice and assistance is needed for such a method would be the greatest assurance I know of that the people of Vietnam, in fact, are deciding on their own destiny. The U.S. goal in Vietnam often has been expressed as giving to the people of Vietnam the privilege of self-determination. This, I think, would do it.

PEOPLE PARTICIPATION

- American policy in respect to helping nations develop economically has been clearly stated by our Presidents, past and present. It is that we will assist those people who will help themselves.

-Any policy of pure giving would be self-defeating for it would infringe on the self-respect of people, make the people of the recipient nation dependent upon the whims of assistance decided by another.

- But when the people of a nation or a village do all that they can to build a university, a secondary school, a bridge, a road or to bring-in rural electrification, and receive from the assisting nation only the help that they cannot provide themselves, then the project is their own and the assistance their right in the community of men where the sharing of experience, technicalological know-how and even material and financial resources is good because in the end it benefits all men.

- This then is the basis of U.S. policy for economic assistance anywhere in the World. It is the U.S. policy in Vietnam: the U.S., through your own government, will help the Vietnamese people -- in their hamlets and villages particularly -- who best demonstrate willingness to help themselves. Success will be rewarded; demonstrated talent among the people will be encouraged.

- War-ravaged Vietnam is a special situation. America is committed here in blood and in honor; moreover, America at Honolulu pledged vast economic assistance to the Vietnamese people.

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO :

DATE:

FROM :

SUBJECT:

Province and district chiefs should be relieved from the divergent pressure brought-on by the military considerations of their superiors on the one hand and the civil needs and aspirations of the provincial people on the other. This will be corrected automatically when province and district chiefs are returned to jurisdiction of the Minister of Interior, a step we all hope will be taken soon.

A major objective of your government and mine is to give the people of Vietnam the power of self-determination. This means that the Vietnamese people in free secret ballot elections will decide for themselves what kind of government they want and who the leaders will be. Now to prepare for such elections is a difficult process. To go through the mechanics of conducting an election is relatively easy, but to assure that everyone will have a truly free choice is not easy. Harder yet for the people will be the problem of identifying and nominating worthy candidates for public office. These should be men of proven capacity and integrity. Such men must be given opportunity and freedom to prove their worth to the people and to discuss their ideals, concepts and plans publicly so that the nations voters can be well informed on each candidate when they go to the polls.

In time of war the granting of the degree of freedom desired by potential candidates for public office is not possible but it is possible to come very close to it. This is possible if the candidates

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will exercise discretion and restraint in their public announcements and the voters themselves will respond with voluntary discipline. Knowing the Vietnamese people, I feel certain that both of these conditions can prevail.

With the military successes of the recent past, new areas of GVN control are reopening. Soon it is hoped that these areas will be transferred to civil control, civil justice, civil administration -- in fact -- civil government. However they still must be protected, a job for the police and police augmentation forces. These are important considerations that the U.S. will assist your government in bringing about.

However today your country in its entirety in effect is a combat zone. Civil government in fact exists only in villages. It is hoped that a national civil authority under the Minister of Interior can soon be established in Saigon (and the other principal cities) and extended down to the province and most district towns as a starter. Such a system would permit expansion of civil authority as each area of the country is pacified. Moreover it would release combat troops from unproductive garrison and guard activities in already pacified areas.

Indications are strong that the enemy has in his ranks many still patriotic Vietnamese whose reasons for being with the VC date back to colonialism, nepotism or other government they genuinely opposed. The government machinery for receiving these people back is the Chieu Hoi program which is functioning very well. Yet improvements are possible in both concept and authority. These should be made and the U.S. stands ready to assist in whatever way it can.

But in reality Chieu Hoi is a program for the people of Vietnam. It is an opportunity for the people to participate directly, to meaningfully bring peace, democracy and national purpose to their country by "calling back" their classmates, their friends and those of their families who are with the VC. The act of returning under Chieu Hoi is one of dignity and free choice.

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The voices and votes of those who return with patriotism in their heart are needed by the Vietnamese people for the trying months and years ahead.